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Accessibility for Students with Short-Term Disabilities

Submitted by Drew Keane

10/31/2018

Question(s):

I request a review of resources provided to students with short-term disabilities on all three campuses to ensure full access access to campus and classrooms.

Rationale:

It has recently come to my attention that the Statesboro campus does not provide mobility assistance to students with short-term disabilities (e.g., a broken leg or a student recovering from a major surgery), which is hindering these students from attending their classes. A recent example will serve to illustrate the issue: a student who had recently had hip-replacement surgery and was unable to make it to classes using crutches because of the pain involved. A faculty member contacted SARC in the Statesboro campus to ask if a golf-cart or some other form of mobility assistance could be provided; however, the faculty member was informed that such resources are not available.

Response:

11/9/2018: Response provided by SARC Director K. Woodruff. (attached)

Minutes, 11-27-2018: a. RFI on Accessibility for Students with Short-term Disabilities (page 10) There was no discussion of this RFI.



SARC does not provide personal devices of any kind, including crutches, scooters, and wheelchairs. Students should work with their medical providers to attain these personal/medical devices when needed. It is not common practice and not advisable for our department to provide personal devices to students. Students can utilize the accessible bus system on the Statesboro campus. Personal transportation is the student's responsibility, not the responsibility of SARC or Georgia Southern University.

If personal transportation was provided, requests could come from students with permanent and temporary mobility impairments. If we provided golf cart transportation, we would have to provide it to classes, dining services and any other activity/event on campus that a student would like to attend. It is important that our office not provide personal devices, personal services, personal equipment, or personal care. Personal transportation is considered a personal service or device. We have other students who require medical equipment or personal care assistance in order to attend class (i.e. use of a motorized wheelchair, catheters, toileting assistance, medication, etc.). SARC cannot provide these services/equipment/supplies because we are not a medical provider. In addition, there is a liability involved with SARC or G.S.U. staff transporting students with injuries or other medical conditions across campus on golf carts.

Students who attend full-time, and therefore pay the recreation fee, are eligible to borrow crutches from Campus Recreation and Intramurals (CRI) if they meet with one of their certified athletic trainers to determine need. CRI has a limited supply of around 20 pairs of crutches.

Health Services has crutches that they prescribe and dispense when deemed medically appropriate. However, they are not available for students to just stop by and request. The student would have to be evaluated first. The charge is \$25 for a set of aluminum crutches with padding. They also have some basic orthopedic supplies (splints, braces, knee/ankle sleeves) that can be prescribed and dispensed when medically appropriate. Charges for those range from \$5 to \$40.

If a student has a legitimate medical need for a more advanced device (i.e., wheelchair, wheeled knee scooter, lockout hinged knee brace or offloader, walker, etc.), Health Services staff can provide a prescription and will direct them to a local medical supply company. Health Services works to educate students on why certain devices are not needed or appropriate. If a student insists on a specific device, but Health Services staff do not feel it is appropriate or if they are unclear on the medical necessity, then they will refer students to an appropriate specialist (usually an orthopedic surgeon) for a second opinion.

Kelly Woodruff, Director
Student Accessibility Resource Center

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE CENTER
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